

SEAFERSTM

THE MAN THAT LEAVES MARKS
VOLUME 2 NUMBER 2

SWEATSHOP

STACY DAVIDSON, TED GEOGHEGAN, ASHLEY KAY
MARCUS NISPEL RETURNS TO CRYSTAL LAKE: SPLINTER'S TOBY WILKINS
BROOKE LEWIS, KNIVES OUT, OF DARKNESS, OLD HABITS DIE HARD, YATTERMAN, HORROR BUSINESS

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VOL. 2 ISSUE 2 MARCH 2009

SCARS

THE MAGAZINE THAT LEAVES MARKS

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INSIDE SCARS

PAGE 5

Old Habits Die Hard

On the set of Bloody Moon's newest feature.

PAGE 12

Friday The 13th's Marcus Nispel

Interview by Scott Essman

PAGE 17

Of Darkness

Interview by Matt Molloy

PAGE 21

Sweat Shop

SCARS gets smashed on the set!

By Kevin Fay

PAGE 26

Splinter

Toby Wilkins interview with Scott Essman.

PAGE 4

Frontal Lobe

Editorial

PAGE 9

Friday The 13th

Original VS Remake

By J.C. Walsh

PAGE 10

Takashi Miike's Yatterman.

By Rachel Berardinelli

PAGE 11

Knives Out

Interview with Todd Smith

PAGE 18

Brooke Lewis

Ray Dowaliby Interviews this Smart and Sexy Seductress!



18



26



21



5



12

SCARS



VOL. 2 ISSUE 2 MARCH 2009

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Image Provided by Ted Geoghegan

FRONTAL LOBE EDITORIAL



As a child the very first Horror I was introduced to was Universal's The Wolfman. The very first Horror magazine to every be placed in my hands was Famous Monsters Of Filmland. I had just recently contacted Forry Akerman and he told me he had heard of SCARS and asked me to send him some copies. I practically ran to the post office to get them in his hands.

A dream had come true. The man who started it all for Horror in print wanted to see MY creation. Months later he was gone. Talk about bittersweet.

We all owe Forry. Scott Essman, I feel, is an unsung Horror Hero and keeps it alive with everything he does. Below find his coverage on the Tribute to Forry in L.A.

Ray D.....

GOODBYE, UNCLE FORRY By Scott Essman

At the Egyptian Theater on Hollywood Boulevard on March 8, friends and fans alike were finally able to say goodbye to their surrogate father in the worlds of classic science-fiction, fantasy and horror: Forrest J. Ackerman, who passed away late last year at 92.

Ackerman was honored as the spiritual pioneer of all things in the genre by notable writers, filmmakers, and craftspeople in the touching afternoon event. Longtime friend and writer Bill Warren gave the most emotional homage in which he cited Ackerman as one of the first fans to take science-fiction seriously, especially with his publication, Famous Monsters of Filmland, but also with his habitual collecting of movie props and artifacts and his championing of all things genre.

Director John Landis, who often featured Ackerman in cameo roles in his films, gave a heartfelt written tribute to the man many called Uncle Forry, sometimes referred to as Dr. Acula. Filmmaker Paul Davids showed a clip from his Saturn Award-winning documentary, The Sci-Fi Boys, in which an aging and ailing Forry visits the grave of his friend, filmmaker George Pal and eerily forecasts that though he almost died recently, he hopes to make it to 100. Director Joe Dante gave a detailed analysis of Famous Monsters and its early impact - he too gave Ackerman cameo appearances. Another director, Guillermo del Toro, flew in from his New Zealand production of The Hobbit to regale the audience with his own detached youth in Mexico where he would scavenge to find sci-fi memorabilia and films, with Famous Monsters having a life-changing impact.

Monster maker Rick Baker, who has won six makeup Oscars, saluted Ackerman and noted that he started collecting the magazine early in life where he first learned that people could become professional creature creators. He said that Famous Monsters is where he first studied other monster makers including Willis O'Brien, Marcel Delgado, Dick Smith, John Chambers, and Jack Pierce, who were often celebrated by Forry.

Perhaps the greatest single tribute was from boyhood Ackerman friend, sci-fi writer Ray Bradbury, relegated to a wheelchair and exuding sorrow as he recalled the early years when he and Forry - plus comrade Ray Harryhausen - saw films and traded sci-fi stories.

Even the newer generations were represented in the two-hour event as Rue Morgue magazine editor Jovanka Vuckovic provided the Gen X perspective and pronounced Famous Monsters as not only a spiritual influence but an artistic one to boot. In fact, when one tallies the people who were not present at the event who have been directly or indirectly influenced by Ackerman's efforts and the denizens of creative people who have followed those original Famous Monsters fans, Ackerman ultimately had a profound impact on way many more people who can be counted. His kind will not be seen again.

OLD HABITS DIE HARD

A Set Visit By: Brandon O'Rear



It is a sunny winter's day in Nashville, Tennessee; seventy-five degrees, not a cloud in the sky, and a gentle breeze swirls red and orange leaves across the grounds of a two-hundred year old cemetery. A beautiful day for a murder... if you're a member of the Hollis family.

Standing at the edge of a freshly dug gravesite outside the Hollis Funeral Home, brothers, Jonah (played by horror movie staple Kane Hodder) and Rendle (played by busy genre actor Jim O'Rear), strip their latest victim of his valuables before cramming him into the same coffin that is currently being occupied by the brothers' previous prey. You see, the Hollis family may be crazy... but they're

not stupid. With the help of their sister Allison (played by Stacey Dixon) and their mother (played by Emmy Award winner Tricia Cast), the Hollis family has carved out a good living by murdering unsuspecting victims, accepting funds from county officials to process the bodies, and then raking in additional dough from the victim's family members for funeral and burial expenses. The money made from pawning the victim's gold ring, necklace, and watch is just a bonus.

Welcome to the set of *Bloody Moon* Film's latest motion picture of madness and mayhem, *OLD HABITS DIE HARD*. The movie, directed by Ben Dixon, is the fourth feature lensed by the Tennessee-based film company and promises to be their wildest offering yet.

In a small, rural town at the edge of nowhere comes a clan that puts the fun back in dysFUNCTIONal. The Hollis family consists of Jonah, the eldest son who moonlights as an unremorseful killer, brother Rendle, who is as deadly as he is

laughable, sister Allison, who attempts to escape her predicament by drawing her freedom in comic books, Mama, who's sanity ship sailed years ago, and baby sister Emily, so wracked with deformities that she has to be kept locked away in the basement.

The Hollis' run one of the areas most successful businesses... The Hollis Funeral Home And Mortuary. Whispers abound from the area locals about the horrible practices that go on within the ancient house, but the Hollis' have gone to great lengths to make sure that the secrets inside the mortuary stay inside the mortuary.

The screenplay, co-written by Ben Dixon and Vaton Hadley, delivers an old-school horror movie feel mixed with darkly humorous overtones in the style of the classic *CREEPY* and *EERIE* magazines.

Satisfied with the last take, the crew scrambles to set up the next shot as Dixon and Hadley give us a brief background on the project. "We knew we wanted to start



on our fourth feature,” states Dixon, “but didn’t know what it was going to be. We decided to base it around an actor that we wanted to work with... somebody recognized in the genre. We went that route in our last film, SHUDDER, with Gunnar Hansen, Ed Neal, John Dugan, and Tiffany Shepis but, on this one, instead of getting three or four names we wanted to try to stick with just one. So, we chose Kane Hodder. Jim O’Rear and I started talking about a story that could utilize Kane’s talents and place him in a role opposite Jim, as brothers. That’s when Vatn approached me with a script he was working on, originally called THE ROACH FAMILY, that kept the brothers approach in mind that Jim and I had discussed.”

“My original idea,” Hadley adds, “came from a guy I knew who grew up with a family of morticians. As kids, they would play in the caskets and build forts inside the mortician’s lab. I thought it was really crazy and would be a good base to build a story upon. At the time, I was working with two film companies in North Carolina, The Film Foundry and Earl Owensby Studios. The Film Foundry made family movies. I really didn’t like the type of movies we were doing there because I wanted to do horror films. Ben Dixon was an old friend of mine, so we collaborated and wrote the screenplay... and here we are.”

As Ben Dixon is called back to direct the next shot, his wife, Stacey Dixon, passes by. Not only is Stacey playing the role of O’Rear and Hodder’s sister, she is also responsible for many aspects of the production, overall. Small, cute, and unassuming, Stacey (a graduate of Tom Savini’s makeup school) does not immediately strike you as someone who would be behind a brutal horror movie of this type. “I grew up watching horror films,” Stacey explains. “The first one that really got my attention was FRIGHT NIGHT. I loved Jerry Dandridge. I was in love with Chris Sarandon when I was a kid.”

When asked about the multiple jobs she is responsible for on top of playing the character of Allison, Stacey states, “Preproduction stuff, some set design, and costuming. The good thing is that I don’t have to do too much makeup because we have this cool makeup guy, Adam Windham, who’s doing most of it.”

Currently, makeup guru Windham is on set playing the corpse being stripped of his belongings and buried by Hodder and O’Rear... a common occurrence on this set where many individuals are taking on multiple jobs to create the project.

As Ben Dixon calls cut and the crew moves on to the next setup, Kane Hodder and Jim O’Rear approach to discuss their characters and function in the film. “I’m the stunt coordinator on the movie and I also play Jonah Hollis,” Hodder states. “He’s the character that kinda runs the funeral home. Well, I guess we all run it, but he’s the head of it. He’s not a friendly guy. He’s an overbearing asshole who’s not very nice to anyone, including his family.”

One of the elements that attracted Kane to the role of Jonah is that, “My character is almost a dual role,” Hodder clarifies. “I’m a silent killer that wears something over his head, which I like doing, but you also get to see him outside the mask and see that he is sometimes pleasant... if he wants to get your money.”

“I play Rendle Hollis,” O’Rear explains, “the most unpredictable member of the Hollis family. He’s quite insane, loves to play dress up, and provides moments of comic relief as well as moments of intense terror. As an actor, it gives me a very large character canvas to work within.”

Hodder adds, “I’ve been telling people for years that Jim and I should play brothers because we have a lot of the same features, especially the eyes. It works well and it’s an interesting story that these guys fit into. You’ve gotta watch out for Rendle’s toolbelt, though!”

Hodder offers no explanation for this last statement other than laughter, with O’Rear stating, “When you see the film, you’ll have all the explanation you need. Let’s just say, it’s not pretty!”

Stunt veteran Rick McCallum stands in the wings, helping Hodder keep an eye on all of the stunt work in the film. “Rick and I have been working together for 28 years,” Hodder informs. “If he coordinates a movie, I’m on it... if I coordinate a movie, he’s on it. We’ve done so many movies together that we work really well as a team.”



As Hodder and O'Rear are called back for the next shot, McCallum sticks around, continuing Kane's thought by explaining, "The first time I worked with Kane was in 1981 on a Chuck Norris film called *LONE WOLF MCQUADE*. We've gone on and done *CHILDREN OF THE CORN*, *DEEP STAR SIX*, *DARK WOLF*, *THE DEVIL'S REJECTS*, *HATCHET*, and many more. Kane usually does more of the acting and I'm usually the piece of meat that gets thrown down the stairs. In this film, though, I get to do a little of both because I'm also playing the role of the county official, who gets into a fight with Jim O'Rear's character, Rendle, and then gets told off by Kane."

The cemetery scene is wrapped and the cast and crew move inside a nearby warehouse where a partial set has been built to represent some of the rooms inside the Hollis Funeral Home. As Hodder prepares for the next scene that will require him to chop down a bathroom door with an axe, narrowly missing one of the other actors, Emmy Award winner Tricia Cast arrives on set to get into makeup. Tricia, best known for her roles on *THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS*, *MARRIED WITH CHILDREN*, *SANTA BARBARA*, and *IT'S YOUR MOVE*, uses sarcastic wit to tell us about her character. "Mama Hollis," Cast describes, "is a nice, nice lady; very sweet, she cares about her kids a lot (all my babies are so sweet), and her



customers are very, very important to her."

Cast, a professional actress since the age of nine, is not extremely familiar with the horror genre, stating, "I don't like watching them... but I love doing them."

Makeup effects artist, Adam Windham, enters the trailer with a box full of latex and other goop that will be applied to Tricia's face over the next hour and a half. Windham went to Full Sail Film School in Orlando, Florida, where he received a Bachelor's Of Science degree in Film Production. Just recently graduating in May, Adam went to work on a documentary for the History Channel for a couple of months before coming to Nashville, from Albuquerque, New Mexico, to work on *OLD HABITS*.

When asked about his time spent in Nashville and working on the set, Windham replies, "I'm definitely digging the downtown parts of Nashville... and the bodies that I've seen being pulled out of the river. But, the backwater towns... not so much. As far as the film, though, working with Tricia Cast is a highlight. She's an amazing actress. Also, getting to meet Kane Hodder. He's definitely a big icon of mine. I'm one of his biggest fans. And, of course, Jim O'Rear, who, interestingly enough, was in the first episode of *THUNDER IN PARADISE*, a television show I enjoyed. I'm having a blast working on



this. I've learned a lot and met some great people."

As Adam begins applying the makeup, director Ben Dixon passes by with a smile on his face, obviously enjoying his time on set. "I love the whole process of film-making," Dixon asserts, "even as stressful as it is wearing different hats. I'm getting to DP on this one and I'm really enjoying working behind the camera lens, like that. Plus, our cast and crew is really great. I give props to all the people who are doing so much."

"I agree," chimes in Stacey Dixon. "Everyone is working their asses off. It's a lot of fun and the set's been drama free. Everyone is really laid back."

One of those key crewmembers that the Dixons' speak highly of is Chris Rucker. A professional in the area of music videos, working with classic talents from Lynyrd Skynyrd and Dr Hook (to name a couple), Rucker takes on everything from sound to lighting to cinematography to co-producing. Rucker has been a key crew player on all of the projects produced by Bloody Moon Films. "I couldn't do a lot without him by my side," admits Dixon. "He is always there when you need him and has a great eye for lighting and detail."

As the two Dixons' move on to prepare for the next scene, Roger Hewlett arrives to

tell us about his character. Hewlett, an actor seen in everything from DEXTER to THE X-FILES to BABYLON 5... and most recently opposite Angela Jolie in Clint Eastwood's CHANGLING... plays the role of Sheriff Jimmy. "He's a bit of the comic relief," attests Hewlett. "He's a guy who's justified by ridding the world of anyone unattractive or crippled or having any kind of deformity. He thinks he's doing God's work by making the world a more beautiful place."

Like stuntman Rick McCallum, Hewlett also comes to the set of OLD HABITS DIE HARD with a Kane Hodder connection. "Kane & I were involved in a few movies together with Rick McCallum. When Rick read the script he asked Kane what he thought about me playing the role of Jimmy and Kane thought I'd be pretty good at it. So, I was very fortunate that they both thought of me. I really like the character and the script is, actually, pretty funny."

As Ben Dixon calls cut on another successful take and the crew prepares the set for a bloody, stunt-filled fight scene, Vaton Hadley, Hodder, and O'Rear approach. Hadley, grinning ear-to-ear exclaims, "This is really a blast. After months and months of writing the script and having these characters in my head, there's nothing more exciting than seeing great actors like Tricia Cast, Kane Hodder, Jim O'Rear, and Roger Hewlett bring them to life."

Hodder adds, "It's a pleasure working with everyone involved with this, really. It's low-key and everyone wants it to be a good movie, so they put everything they have into it. I love productions like that."

"Definitely," O'Rear states. "I've worked in all of Ben's previous films and this one is, by far, the most polished, organized, exciting, and fun project that he's tackled, to date. The cast and crew are top notch!"

But, as the director, Ben Dixon always gets the last word, stating, "I think when it's all finished we're going to have a really great piece of merchandise."

Watch for OLD HABITS DIE HARD. The Hollis family will be coming to get you soon!



"My original idea," Hadley adds, "came from a guy I knew who grew up with a family of morticians. As kids, they would play in the caskets and build forts inside the mortician's lab."



FRIDAY THE 13TH ORIGINAL VS REMAKE

By J.C. Walsh



Known for its creative kill scenes and chilling music, “Friday The 13th” stands as one of horror’s most successful franchises. Despite the negative response from critics, the movie was loved by fans and ended up spawning several sequels in its blood splattering wake, bringing to the world horror’s most beloved hockey masked killer, Jason. Now nearly thirty years later, director Marcus Nispel (associated with Michael Bay Productions) brings us the retelling of Jason’s story in a richer, darker look - while also sticking to “Friday the 13th” film tradition by exploring the relationship between Jason and his mother, and a healthy combo of sex and violence.

The remake opens where the first film ended. The last survivor of Mrs. Voorhees’ wrath takes a final stand, while the psychotic mother rants the classic dialogue of seeking revenge for the death of her precious Jason. The young woman decapitates Mrs. Voorhees and then runs for help. Shortly after, we witness a young Jason come out of the water and pick up his first weapon, the machete used to kill his own mother.

Shooting to present time, a group of teenagers set out for fun (read: trying to score some weed) and find a spot in the woods to camp out in, not realizing that they are nearby an old decrypted Crystal Lake. Unlike the previous films, there are no camp counselors, but the remake holds true by keeping Crystal Lake and its legendary killer Jason a scary tale to be told by the campfire. Soon the teenagers are picked off one by one in a very intense opening sequence to the



film, revealing the Jason from Part 2 sporting the burlap sack. The burlap sack wasn’t just a bag on the head like the earlier film; the material was plastered to his head, a terrifying mummified look as though he had been wearing it for years.

You may remember that the old Jason briefly ran - it wasn’t till Part 6 he was a zombie that walked fast and somehow caught up with his victims no matter how fast they were. The new Jason is much faster, a more brutal and primitive killer than his predecessors. He thinks and calculates like a hunter. Much like Part 2 he has a lair, but the lair in this new film is an underground hideout, a labyrinth full of twist and turns.

After the intense opening, it’s a month later and the movie focuses on another group of friends that are going to their buddy’s house to party. They soon bump into a young man, Clay, who’s desperately searching for his sister, Whitney, the girl who went missing in the beginning of the movie. This was a resemblance to Part 4, where a character named Rob was searching for his sister as well, who died in Part 2.

Even though the characters are just a bunch of kids partying, their joking brings humor and a sense of empathy for them. Don’t worry, there’s still that one particular character (Trent) that you can’t wait to see die because he’s such a jerk.

What really kept homage to the Friday the 13th films was the intuition behind the kill scenes. Give Jason



any type of weapon: machete, axe, bow and arrow, a screwdriver, and he’ll show you different ways to kill and mangle a human being. The remake did not fall short on what the franchise was so popular for. It brought back a couple classic kills from previous films, such as the fan favorite sleeping bag scene.

A major let down to the movie was that they didn’t go further into Jason’s past - a direction many assumed the filmmakers would take - making the remake really not much different than the other films.

What little they showed of the past was visceral, and I’d have to say did add some depth to the infamous killer. Coupled with the added brutality in the equation, Jason is scary again instead of just a walking action figure.

As a fan of the series all in all I thought it was just another enjoyable “Friday” film, and a great horror flick. There was plenty of sex and gore, and you have one of the greatest icons of horror doing what he does best.

With a classic Jason ending, it leaves us wondering if there will be a new start to the series. If so, “Friday the 13th” the remake has brought the new fans, who have never seen previous films, and the old fans something to rejoice about.

YATTERMAN REALIZING THE DREAM

By Rachel Berardinelli



Before his new movie “Yatterman” screened at this year’s Comic Con in New York, director Takashi Miike took the stage and made a preface: “Yatterman” would make you happier than you were before you watched the film.

“Yatterman” has been Miike’s dream project for a number of years (probably since he saw the original anime series on TV in ’77). It’s a movie about robots, love triangles, and the possible destruction of the world as we know it. That said, “Yatterman” is still very much a Miike film, complete with cock jokes and tit missiles. Any Miike fans remember the rebirth scene during “Gozu”? Yeah, there’s a “Gozu”-like moment, where one of the male characters emerges from the body of a villain. And did you ever want to see a couple of robots DO IT? Get your fix here. And yet, so much of the movie is sweet. Touching, even.

This year’s Comic Con audience for the film was comprised, I thought, overwhelmingly of loving and devoted fan girls of Sho Shikurui, the star of the film. My suspicion was confirmed when the host asked, “Who is here solely for Sho Shikurui?!” (cue ear drenching, high pitched screams), followed by “Who is here solely for Miike?!” (my cry lost among the baritones). I can only hope some of the boppers who loved the film will seek out other titles from Miike’s filmography, like “Audition” or “Ichi the

Killer,” and be in for a real surprise. It’s almost absurd to think of a J-Pop star even being in a Miike film, for that matter. But the character played by Shikurui, Gan (or Yatterman 1), is so adorable that it’s easy to see why so many females swoon over him. His girlfriend in the film, Ai (or Yatterman 2!), is equally cute. You’d think they’d run into some real difficulty being a couple of young superheroes, but their foes are so pathetic at what they do that Yatterman 1 and 2 pretty much have no problem taking them with their toy robots they build in their shop.

The film, which moves at lightning speed, follows Gan and Ai in their assistance to a young girl who needs to find her father, an archaeologist who had uncovered pieces of the Skull Stone. If the four pieces of the Stone Skull merge together, it signals the loss of the world in the hands of a villain who can stop use the Stone Skull to stop time. Because the pieces are slowly coming together through the efforts of those who want them, elements of the world go missing (The Brooklyn Bridge, for one), and it is up to the Yatterman to save the day. There will be a crucial moment when the four pieces come together which is the

only opportunity to halt the destruction of the world. But their villains, lead by the sexy Doronjo and her doofus gang, Boyacky and Tonzra, are also in search of the missing pieces. Oh, and there is also one more thing – Doronjo seems to be growing out of her role of villain, and is inexplicably in love with Gan, much to the dismay of Ai. And of course Boyacky is in love with Doronjo. Plus, robots mess things up by copulating to massive orgasms. Beyond the insane and hilarious plot line, the film itself was shot incredibly, with pretty and impressive CGI. You can tell it is definitely Miike’s biggest budget to date.

The Q & A following the film was entertaining in its own right; Miike quickly wanted to tell the crowd, “Please don’t think that all of Japan is like this.” He revealed to the audience that what had attracted him to Yatterman was the message that, “You don’t need superheroes. You can just be yourself.” I left the theater that night feeling almost sublime (maybe because I ran into Miike on my way to the bathroom?!) and pretty damn good about things... and a million times happier than before I went in.

KNIVES OUT

Interview By Matt Molloy

Usually when you hear the term Super Group, the end result is often far from super. But members of HELL YEAH, POLKA-

DOT CADAVER, NOTHINGFACE and DOG FASHION DISCO have joined forces to cut up that bad reputation and eat your heart out... literally.

SCARS: How did KNIVES OUT come to be?

Todd Smith: Tom Maxwell and I had met when my former band Dog Fashion Disco had toured with his former band Nothingface in 2000. We had always talked about doing a heavy project together and only

recently found the free time to devote to getting songs and an album together.

SCARS: Describe the sound of KNIVES OUT for us.

Todd: I would say Knives Out is aggressive and energetic, heavy and groove based.

SCARS: Is KNIVES OUT being considered a side project or a full out band?

Todd: We are focusing on Knives like it is our main focus at this point.

SCARS: You are known for your more eclectic projects like Polkadot Cadaver, the Alter Boys, and of coarse, Dog Fashion Disco. Do you have a different approach to your writing for KNIVES OUT?

Todd: No, it basically starts with a riff or a song title or lyric, and through collaborations with the other band members we try to fill in the pieces of the musical puzzle. its usually just stringing a bunch of riffs together that naturally compliment each other.

SCARS: Do horror movies or films in general have any influence on your lyrical writings?

Todd: Yeah. I get inspiration from other lyricists, authors and artists. I'm more attracted to darker side of art.

SCARS: When can we expect an album out on the shelves?

Todd: We are recording the record at Wrightway studios in Baltimore right now. If I had to guess, I would say the album would see a release around mid summer 09.

SCARS: You also have a solo project you're working on called El-Creepo! Tell us a little about it.

Todd: Anyone interested can check out some songs at El-creepo's myspace with is myspace.com/elcreepowillgetyou..... it's more acoustic based and mellow for the most part.

SCARS: Can we expect anything new from Polkadot Cadaver, the Alter Boys or even Dog Fashion Disco?

Todd: Polkadot Cadaver will be recording another record sometime in late 09. Dog fashion Disco are dead!!!

SCARS: How about anything new from Nothingface or Hell Yeah?

Todd: Hell Yeah I imagine would be working on a new record later on this year.

SCARS: Anything else that you would like the SCARS readers to know?

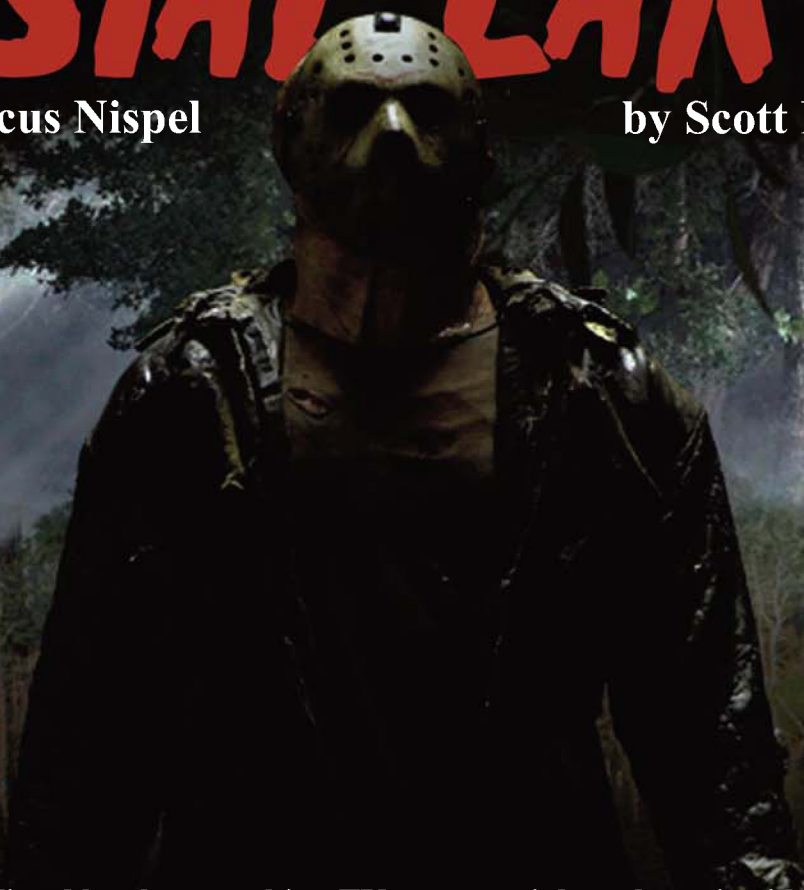
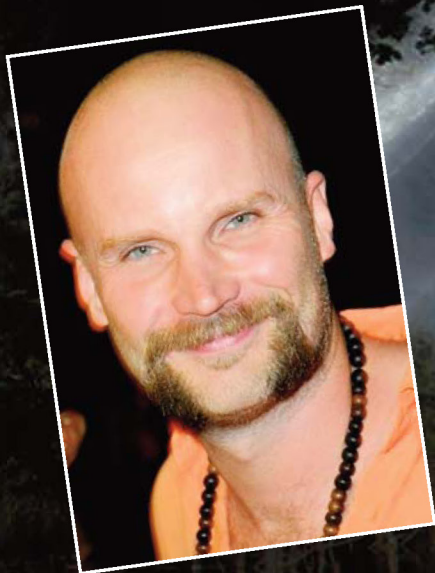
Todd: If anyone is interested in any of the aforementioned bands in this interview, check them out by doing a music search on Myspace. Thanks for the interview, Todd.



RETURN TO **CRYSTAL LAKE**

An Interview with Marcus Nispel

by Scott Essman



Although he's only 45, Marcus Nispel has been making TV commercials and music videos for 20 years, as he says, "to pay the bills." But, obviously, Nispel's heart has been to make feature films. He burst onto the scene with 2003's revised TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE. That version of the often-filmed tale in sequels and remakes stood out due to Nispel's infusion of harsh reality using a washed-out stylized palette of colors and with most of the work created in-camera on set. Now, Nispel is back with another reimagining, this time, with his take on the FRIDAY THE 13TH series. Like TCM, Nispel has returned to the original root of the material of the first film, re-inventing the original myths upon which those legendary horror franchises are based.

SCARS: Why did you decide to take on FRIDAY THE 13TH, having already remade a horror classic with TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE?

MARCUS NISPEL: I think it's an interesting task to revive the franchises. I enjoy it because watching these types of movies is a ritual. People know what's going to happen – the different stages. They wouldn't want it any other way. It's got a receptive and interested group of fans. You give them what they want but not what they expect. But you can put twists on it. There is

a lot to be said for remaking something like it. If you look at the original, that came out after TEXAS CHAINSAW and HALLOWEEN. They had spawned that yarn already. It's a similar type of situation. If it was a crime movie or who-done-it, you wouldn't want to make it. Here we go back to the original mythology from the first few movies. It's going back to the root of that.

SCARS: What specific successes are you taking from your TCM remake?

MN: There are things you can't change,

but all the rest can be changed – fresh jumps that we come up with. What is the ring that holds it all together? You don't want to upset the fanboys. In that regard, all remakes are the same. They have a certain value system that you bring along as a director. How far is too far? How little is too little? The story is different.

SCARS: What is exactly is different with this version of the story?

MN: I read the script and I liked it a lot. It was a page turner like TCM. Everybody

liked it. We had been developing it, but no script came in that we liked. Two weeks before the writer's strike, a script came in that we liked. After two weeks, Michael Bay, the writers and three studios all liked the script. The reason we loved it is - there was no development. We couldn't change it. When it came in, we just loved it and couldn't screw it up. Usually, with a huge franchise, there would be many rewrites and director changes. It's rarely like this. If you overwork it, it comes out bad. Better things happen when it's fresh.

SCARS: What was your shooting process on the film?

MN: My cinematographer was the DP from the original TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE [Daniel Pearl]. It was a much more calculated effort. We had as many days and hours as the original. At the end of the day, you have the same type of crew and days to get it done. What you look at as a director is how much time you have to do the damage. Most likely, if you had more time, it wouldn't be right. I saw the directors' commentary from John Carpenter. HALLOWEEN was redone so many times, and every time that they tried to better it, with more effects and cinematography, but that's exactly where it failed. Most likely, having less is for the better - having to be inventive is much better.

SCARS: Is there a good deal of gore effects like with Tom Savini in the original FRIDAY THE 13TH?

MN: We have very little. Every time you put blood on them, they have to do a wardrobe change. You stop doing it. We do it later with CG. At the end, you cut it together, and it's easier without all of that blood. Without even trying, you end up with something much more sophisticated. We don't have that much blood in my movies. In the originals, they have less blood than a CSI episode. There's no gore in the first TEXAS CHAINSAW. It's a trick.

SCARS: How did you re-approach the character of Jason?

MN: I broke it up by kills. That's definitely there. I'd like to believe so. He's obviously a killer. The writers never refer to Jason this way. They refer to him as the





anti-hero. The antagonist is always the asshole who gives everybody trouble in the group of young kids. The monster is a guy who finds our sympathy somehow. I think a lot of the fanboys who like these kind of movies like the killer. Rob Zombie is interested in the kids. Usually, the killer is wronged in some way by the preppies and yuppies and beauty queens. I always identify with the killer. In TCM, Leatherface's face was messed up, so these beauty queens who used to heckle him, he takes their pretty faces and wears them as his own face. In CARRIE, it's a revenge movie. Who didn't go as a geek to prom night feeling ostracized?

The antagonist is always the asshole who gives everybody trouble in the group of young kids. The monster is a guy who finds our sympathy somehow.

Jason's mythology is a kid that was sent to camp and was somewhat off, the camp counselors were supposed to look after him, but the kid drowns when the counselors are fucking around. And Jason comes back. We are not making a movie-of-the-week, but there's a reason why these types of characters relate to people in some way. If you just try to come up with the boogeyman, people might not be interested in them.

In the first one, where he wasn't in it, there's not that much supernatural stuff going on – only in the end where it's a dream sequence. The monster living and breathing and who could be your neighbor. As exciting as it would be in a Sci-fi movie, you know that a supernatural CG monster isn't real.

SCARS: What were the parameters of the shoot?

MN: Even though we had slightly more money than TEXAS CHAINSAW, we had fewer days – about four weeks. We shot in

Texas, making it look like New Jersey even though we didn't have a camp or a lake. We had to figure out how to do that. It was a strange and interesting. The difference between the typical horror movie and this, you don't have a fly-by-night horror movie. You do wind up with very talented actors. Your duty is to find the next Jamie Lee Curtis or Jessica Biel or Sigourney Weaver. To wind up in a movie of this sort with good actors, you become the type of director who blends into the wall – you make good casting decisions, but let them run and keep things lively. I usually give them three takes max and then we move on so that it's a real experience and nobody gets too comfortable. You want to keep it acute and immediate, and good things come out of that.

SCARS: Do you generally like to use the same crew members from film to film and on this film as well?

MN: Because we wound up back in Austin, a lot of the crew members were the same. They have the same task: almost 40-50 set-ups per day. For one thing, you have half the days of most movies. You have much less days, so you have to work much faster. I like a lot of detail and choices for the editors. I don't like a shoot day where people sit around. You want it to be a muscular experience. If I did a movie like *THE RING*, it would be different. You want to have your angles for the kills. You set up the suspense shots.

SCARS: How much work did you do with visual effects on the film?

MN: In a movie like this, you don't want to have too much in it. When I started going to the movies, one of my first big movie experiences was *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS*. Nothing looked like digital effects. If it would have looked fake, you would have frowned upon that. Now, there is a whole new generation that grew up with video games. They have a much higher tolerance of digital effects. I think unless you do a cartoonish type of movie like *THE SPIRIT* and *300*, I try to stay away from it.

For a suspense movie, where you have to suspend people's cynicism, you want to make them believe that it is really happening, and a digital effect would ruin it. Right away, it would lose its value and au-



thenticity of what it's trying to be. You deal with fire and dangerous situations, but you don't want it to read like that. 99% of the scene should be real, but 1% of the moment should be CG. Watching *BENJAMIN BUTTON*, 99% of all shots were CG. It's a real accomplishment, but it's rare. Plus, you have little money with this type of movie going in. Am I going to spend it on special effects, or am I going to spend it on a great actor? I would like to do a more special effects-based movie. I worked for an optical house, but I never got a chance to use it.

SCARS: What future movies would you like to make?

MN: I wanted to do *1001 ARABIAN NIGHTS* or *THE THIEF OF BAGHDAD*. It gets suspicious if you do too many horrors. To do a movie like *FRIDAY THE 13TH*, where people jump out of their seats, it's a perfect vehicle for that. You want to satisfy yourself on a different level. I'd like to do a thriller next. It all depends on the next script that comes through the door. When I grew up in Germany, movies would come out in America and we would know about them, but for a whole year, we wouldn't get to see them. We were so hyped by the time the movie came out, we had played the movie in the sandbox and in the treehouse. I'm interested in characters that trigger that, like in *CONAN* and *STAR WARS*. Something that really winds up in your DNA. To deal with that type of character would be fun.

I get scripts all the time, but the big scripts go to the big directors. To do something decent, it would be winning the lottery to get the super great script. You don't want to get James Cameron's leftovers. You always develop something. To develop something from scratch could take years. The great thing with the remakes is that it goes through the system much quicker. *PATHFINDER* was my concept all the way through, but it's a tough market to compete. You've got to come flying out of the gate.

SCARS: What happened to your movie remake of *Frankenstein* that was a TV pilot?

MN: Dean Koontz and Martin Scorsese and me. But it was top heavy for a TV show. I've never seen anything dark done

for TV. You sit in a movie theater and it's suspenseful. The crinkling of a bag could take you out of a suspenseful movie. On TV, it's always about urgency and dialogue. That's the reason. You can have a law show or a sitcom... the moment you try to do suspense, it's tough to do in that medium.

SCARS: How does your work go over in Germany?

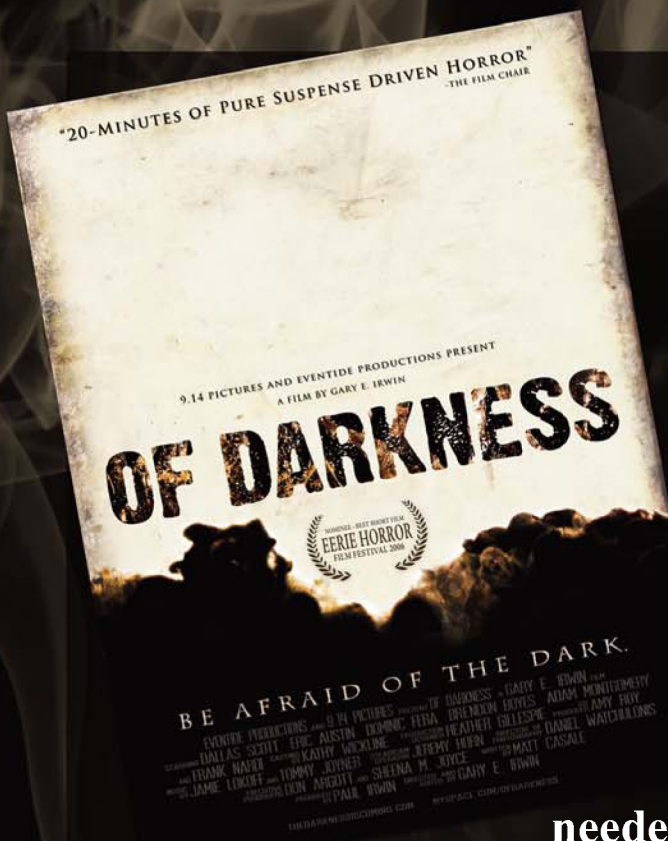
MN: That's the country where I seem to sell the least. An R-Rated movie in Germany can only be shown after midnight. The original TCM was declared as illegal. I couldn't get it on video. In the other European countries, my movies work well.

SCARS: What do you think is next for you?

MN: IMMACULATE CONCEPTION – it is ostensibly a ROSEMARY'S BABY – a girl gets pregnant and doesn't know how. She feels everybody is against her and something is going on. Just when you feel you know where it's going at the end of the first act, with a demon seed, you realize that it's a DNA cloned body of Christ. A religious war is being fought over it. It's more like a thriller or a MARATHON MAN.

Thanks Marcus!





ARE YOU AFRAID?

Interview by Matt Molloy

Director Gary E. Irwin sheds some light on his award winning short film OF DARKNESS and how he only needed 20 minutes to scare the hell out people!

SCARS: How would you describe OF DARKNESS?

GARY E. IRWIN: It's a supernatural horror film about a group of teenagers who, during a sleepover, unwittingly unleash an entity of pure malevolence from an ancient book - an evil that attacks in the form "of Darkness."

SCARS: OF DARKNESS is only about 20 minutes long, but has more scares than a lot of feature films that are out there now. Why did you decide to make this a short film?

GARY: We wanted to do a film that we could all use as a calling card. Matt Casale (Writer), Paul Irwin (Producer) and I had done some projects in the past, but we hadn't tackled a traditional narrative short that we could all use to promote our talents. Matt and I are huge horror fans, so that just felt like the right genre to try and make a splash in. He had a rough idea of this film in his head since he was teenager. Once he pitched the initial idea to Paul and I, we helped shape it into the film you see on screen. Once the idea was laid out, we all felt really confident that if we pulled it off, we would have a kickass narrative that we could use as a springboard into features.

SCARS: Short films can often be just as challenging as making a full length feature. How was the process for you?

GARY: I think with this particular idea, we tried to stay conscience of our limitations (budget, time, etc.) so it made the process a little bit easier. Paul and I had a bunch of physical production experience, so that helped out when we were crafting the idea and shaping the shoot and schedule. Of course, once we got on set, we all got beat up a little bit, but I do have to say that for shooting overnights, on no-budget, with kid actors, and an all volunteer crew, I'm extremely happy with the results. Throughout the process of making the film I was always saying that I wanted this film to be judged on how good it was, not how good it was in spite of the budget. So needless to say, I'm excited that a lot of reviews have not only praised the film, but have mentioned that it is better than some of the bigger Hollywood horror films that have come out in the past few years. That always puts a smile on my face. Just wait and see what we can do with a bigger budget!

SCARS: Do you have any interest in turning OF DARKNESS into a full length film?

GARY: After the short's initial festival

success, Matt and I met a few times about expanding the story, and I think it may be something we revisit down the road a bit. We're all kinda burnt out with the story, so when we sat down to try and map out the feature we kept running into walls. I have some great ideas for specific scenes for the feature that would knock people's socks off, but we need to tweak the structure a bunch in order to string everything together. Now that we're in the thick of developing a new feature film idea and I have a little distance from it, I'm definitely excited at the idea of revisiting and expanding OF DARKNESS.

SCARS: What inspired you to make OF DARKNESS?

GARY: Well the initial ideas and inspiration came from Matt's head. (It's a scary place, full of tons of inspiring ideas.) Once we started mapping the film out, the thing I was the most excited about was this idea that children always seem to be untouchable in films. For the most part, when you see a smaller child in a film, they're usually going to be OK. I wanted to take that idea and throw it out the window. Once things started going bad for these guys, I wanted the audience to feel that everyone was expendable. Just a bunch of kids in the middle of something that gets really out of control.

SCARS: Most movies these days have plenty of gore and brutal killing scenes to get scares, yet you achieved many of them with nothing but lighting, sounds and the fear of the unknown. Was it a conscious decision to make the film that way?

GARY: Absolutely. Frankly, I'm kind of burned out on torture, gore, splatter, shock horror. I'll take an old-fashioned spooky movie any day of the week. From the beginning of the process that's something we always held close to us. We were always preaching the idea of an audience's mind being scarier than anything we could manifest on screen. Personally, I used a film like *ALIEN* as an example of that. It has such a great "fear of the unknown" vibe throughout it, and the first time I saw that film, it scared the crap out of me.

SCARS: Was it challenging to work with such a young cast?

GARY: It was a little bit challenging, but I'm not sure if that was because of the limited budget or because of the kids. We had an amazing group of kids to work with. Dom, Adam, Frank, Dallas, Eric and Brendon were true professionals. In terms of directing them, I like to talk to kids as adults. I've always felt that if you talk to a kid like a kid, they'll respond as a kid, but if you treat them as an equal or peer, they'll respond that way. The experience didn't in any way spoil us from working with kids again. In fact, *INDIGO FALLS* is set in high school and the protagonist is a 15-year old kid.

SCARS: I noticed *OF DARKNESS* is now available on FearNet, which must be quite an honor. How did that come about?

GARY: The FEARnet thing had been brewing for a while. Our Co-Producer Amy Roy introduced us to a friend of hers over at FEARnet, so we sent the film over and the rest is history. I'm really excited about that deal. I went to FEARnet on Demand when it premiered back in December to check it out, but didn't watch the whole thing...I've seen it way too many times. Its first screening run was from 12/1/08 to 1/31/09 and it got around 65,000 viewers. It's scheduled to be back up sometime in March.

SCARS: Where might one purchase this fine film?

GARY: Thank you for asking this question. Trying to get folks to buy a short film is kinda tricky. We have a few purchase options set up for *OF DARKNESS*...

1. Buy the DVD directly from Eventide Productions - www.eventideproductions.net - This is our preferred method, of course. \$10.00 and it goes right into the pockets of us filmmakers.

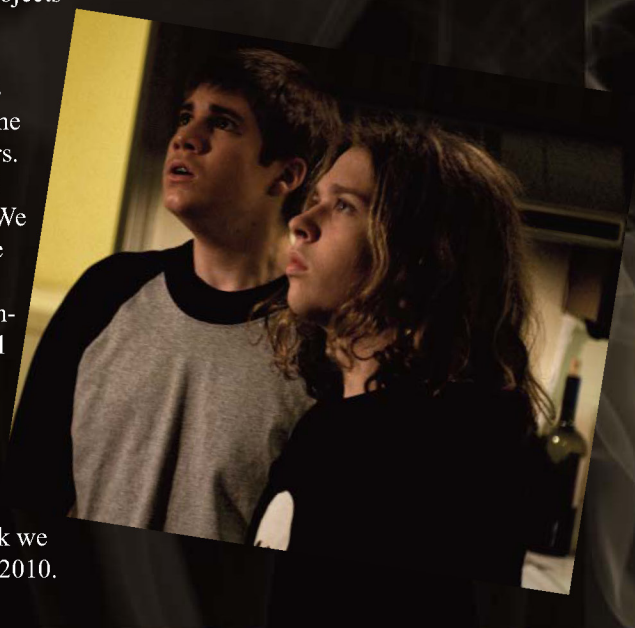
2. Stream or download the film from Caachi.com. This is the next best thing - \$4.50 and 75% goes into the filmmaker's pockets. Folks can also add a nifty little Vidget to put on their Facebook or MySpace page.

3. Buy the DVD from Amazon.com - Some folks prefer to order things directly from Amazon.com these days, so through CreateSpace, *OF DARKNESS* is available for purchase. This option costs \$12.99 - Honestly, we may only see half of this cash, but if it means more people get to see it, then it's still a solid option.

We have a few more distribution options cooking. Soon, the film will be available to rent through Amazon's Video OnDemand and we're also working on making the film available through iTunes.

SCARS: Do you have any other projects in the works?

GARY: Yeah, the *OF DARKNESS* team is back at it again, and this time we're diving into feature film waters. The film is called *INDIGO FALLS* and it's based on an idea of mine. We spent a lot of 2008 mapping out the story, and currently Matt is knee deep in writing the script. It's a coming of age story with a High School backdrop that blends elements of science-fiction and the supernatural. We're hoping to get the script done by the spring and begin the long and grueling process of casting and financing. With a little luck we could be in production by summer 2010.



Brooke Lewis

SCARS: Give us a brief history about Brooke.

BROOKE LEWIS: Well, Ray, my family, friends and business associates will all tell you there is nothing "brief" about Brooke. I am surely a complex creature with a lot to express! I feel like I have been very fortunate to know what I wanted to do with my life at an early age. I was the kid who sat by the TV and talked to the characters, watched all the horror film marathons every Friday the 13th and fantasized about Dracula! I performed in musicals growing up, went to college for theatre, then bagged acting to go to law school, because I thought that was the "right" thing to do... Well, it wasn't and I bagged that instead.

I headed right to NYC and successfully made a living doing Tony n' Tina's Wedding Off-Broadway and indie films for 4 years. Television work brought me to LA-LA Land and I started my indie film company Philly Chick Pictures six years ago. I originally started in comedy, but always loved horror and dreamed of working in the horror genre and years later, here I am and loving every minute of it. I am blessed to have the most loving and supportive family and friends in my life and now I am blessed to have the support of this incredible horror community and I look forward to a long journey here.

SCARS: Looking at your IMDB it would seem that you have got to be one of the busiest ladies in independent film. What makes you so sought after?

BROOKE: Ray, if only that were true! I have been working in the entertainment business for many years, so this recent "success" is surely not an overnight thing. It has taken a ton of blood, sweat, tears, training, failures, rejections and disappointments to get to this point. I hope that the fans and people in the industry see that I have some talent as both an actress and producer. I feel at this point in my life and career, I have truly paid my "dues." I also think that anyone who has worked with me will tell you that my passion, determination, commitment, integrity and work ethic inspire and attract them to work with me again. I believe that when you commit to something with your heart, soul and truth, it might take time, but you will bring it to fruition. Oh...let's not forget my big booty and my sassy personality! :)

SCARS: You're currently working on BIND, Dan Walton's new project. Tell us a little about

your character Joan.

BROOKE: BIND is a special project to me! I ran into the Canadian horror "legend", Dan Walton, at the LA Fangoria Convention earlier this year and when he returned to Vancouver, he called me and said, "You know the more I think about it and get to know you, the more I realize how perfect you are for the lead role, Joan, in my film." Joan is a tough, little bitch, so I don't know if I should be flattered or offended! Either way, I fell in love with Joan, because she is a strong, powerful female character and I cannot wait to tear her up!

SCARS: iMURDERS is something I'm excited about and you just happen to be in that as well. Give us a little taste of what we can expect.

BROOKE: In it, and proud to be one of the Executive Producers of it! I am excited that you are excited and I hope we deliver everything the viewers expect. I fell in love with the story of iMURDERS the minute Robbie Bryan, the director, and Ken Del Vecchio, the producer, sent it to me. The premise of chat room murders was so timely and intriguing, with the MySpace and Facebook craze, I knew I had to be a part of it. I am extremely intuitive and, I swear, I knew that this project would explode! To be able to help create a low budget horror/thriller with a cast that includes Tony Todd, William Forsythe, Gabriel Anwar, Billy Dee Williams, Margaret Colin, Wilson Jermaine Heredia and my girl, Miranda Kwok, has been an absolute joy! Playing Agent Lori Romano opposite the fabulous Tony Todd was such a gift. The role was so different than the "sex pot" roles I have been offered in the past, it was an unbelievable opportunity for me as actress. I cannot wait to watch Robbie Bryan and Christie Botelho experience an abundance of success with this film!

SCARS: What film that you've worked on in the past year has you the most excited and why?

BROOKE: iMURDERS... Done! I truly believe that this film has taken me to another level as both an actress and producer. The love, pain, determination and support around this project cannot be explained. To have the support from the horror community that we have experienced from Scars, Fangoria, Shriekfest, Horror Yearbook is un-fucking-believable

If I had to choose a film outside of the horror genre, it would be Marc Clebanoff's GERALD.

Interview By Raymond Dowaliby

This is a low budget dark comedy I am excited to have acted in with Louis Mandylor, and if my intuition is right on this one, after seeing a rough cut last week, we are talkin' Sundance, baby!

SCARS: What should we expect from Brooke in 2009?

BROOKE: I hope some sleep! :) Nah, if 2009 is half as good as 2008, I will be one grateful little lady! I was honored with Scream Queen of the Month November 2008, so I am hoping the title will stick in the new year. I have a few films that will be released, including BREAK starring Michael Madsen, THE DRUM BEATS TWICE starring Costas Mandylor and a web pilot called LIFE'S A BUTCH starring Butch Patrick. I have several film projects that I am attached to, including Ford Austin's DAHMER VS. GACY, Keith Stoddard's BLOOD DE MADAM, an UNTITLED project with DRAC Studios and I will be doing some hosting with Hart D. Fisher and AMERICAN HORRORS.

My most honorable and passionate project for 2009 is the Hot Hunks of Horror 2009 Calendar! I am honored to have been chosen the Hot Hunks of Horror Hottie 2009 for the calendar that benefits the Lynn Sage Foundation for Breast Cancer Research. A special thanks goes out to Parrish Randall, Andy Rose and Marv Blauvelt for creating the space for the horror community to fight for a tremendous cause.

SCARS: Thank you for taking the time to talk with us. Where can our readers go to find everything they want to know about Brooke?

BROOKE: Ray and Scars, I cannot thank you enough for inviting me to Scars and creating these perfect questions. The readers can always check out the latest "Brooke" stuff at Philly Chick Pictures, www.phillychickpictures.com.

Love, health, and horror to all in 2009! XO
Brooke Lewis





SWEAT SHOP

SCARS SPILLS THE GUTS ON THIS INDY SMASH!

Interview by Kevin Fay

It's a surprisingly chilly November afternoon when Scars visits the Houston, Texas set of *Sweatshop*. Still, the below-average temperatures don't slow down director Stacy Davidson or his cast and crew. As Davidson calls "Action!" the film's welding-masked killer (portrayed by hulking newcomer Jeremy Sumrall) hoists an enormous foundry hammer high above his head and swings downward, crushing one of the film's central cast members into a pile of gore in one fell swoop.

"Holy shit! Cut!" Davidson blurts out, as the dumbfounded cast and crew explode into disbelieving laughter. Several grips immediately begin referring to that as *Sweatshop*'s "money shot," but Davidson is quick to note that there's still much more to come.

A self-professed ode to the slasher films Davidson and co-writer Ted Geoghegan grew up on, *Sweatshop* is hoping to take the masked killer concept to a new level - and introduce a new sub-genre its creators jokingly refer to as "smasher films."

A group of oversexed kids break into a deserted factory with less than an hour to set up everything for an impromptu rave, but as every slasher from '80 to '87 taught us, it never works out as planned. We had the opportunity to wander through its gore-drenched sets, and caught up with the co-writer/director impressive new indie standout.

SCARS: Looking around this set, *SWEATSHOP* really feels like a huge collaboration of friends and family. Would that be a proper assumption?

STACY DAVIDSON: Well, I went into filmmaking with the philosophy that knowledge is power. To that end, I tried to learn every area of production from day one. I figure if I can light, shoot, edit, and do the sound design and effects, I'll never get stuck at the mercy of anyone else for lack of crew or budget. The other half of

my philosophy is to work with friends and crew that I know and can trust. My sets usually have a family atmosphere, and I can truly say I consider all those people I collaborate with some of my closest friends.

SCARS: So, if you trust them, they end up with more responsibilities, but more chances to shine?

STACY: Right, and our lead actress is a great example of that. I met Ashley Kay

while shooting *Domain of the Damned*. She came in to play a zombie, and quickly became one of our most reliable crew members, assisting with effects makeup on dozens of shoots. She also played over half a dozen roles, ranging from victims to zombies. Her dedication to filmmaking is staggering, and as if that's not cool enough, the girl has some serious acting chops. She's one of the best I've ever worked with. A lot of my extras have deserved much bigger roles, so one of the most exciting aspects of *Sweatshop* was



having the chance to cast a bunch of bit players from *Domain* in leading roles. Brent Himes played a cop in *Domain*, Naika Malveaux was a zombie, and Krystal Freeman played the "real vampire" who attacked Ashley, now they're all in the limelight.

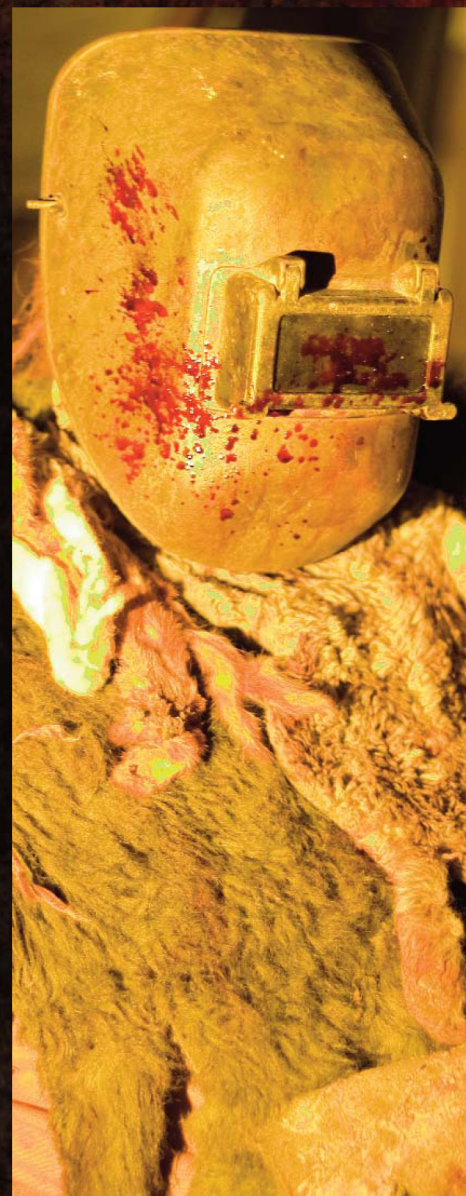
And I had so much fun watching Melanie Donihoo, Peyton Wetzel and Danielle Jones do their thing on the sets of *Closet Space*, *Sway*, and *The Flesh Keeper*. I can't wait to see all three of them in *Walking Distance*, and with *Sweatshop*, I figured it was high time I got the chance to work with them myself.

SCARS: Tell us a little bit about your history and working with writer/producer Ted Geoghegan on *SWEATSHOP*.

STACY: I met Ted through director Mel House, and we became fast friends. He

had developed the *Sweatshop* concept a while back, but I got into the mix when I found myself frustrated about larger projects that were stalling for various reasons. When you try to do super-ambitious projects, losing control to producers because of money is always a big worry, so I wanted a project I could control. Something I could do in one or two locations and something I could shoot relatively light, fast, and stay in total control of.

I recall asking Ted for a list of scripts he had lying around. I knew he was a writer, and writers always have a stack of scripts and treatments. They were all really intriguing, but *Sweatshop* just leapt off the page. Big scary location, hulking beast with enormous hammer, a group of hot raver chicks and punk rocker guys... I remember saying to him in a frenzy, "Dude this is an instant classic. How has this not



been made yet?! Can I have this script? I want to make this. I will make this movie right now!"

SCARS: And that's what got the ball rolling?

STACY: After a few conversations, we nailed things down and sealed the deal. We put together some private investors - all friends - and it became my second directorial project, with my girlfriend Laura Bryant as producer. I started out with my local go-to guys Kristi Boul and Mike Oliver doing effects, and then about halfway through the shoot we welcomed the unexpected arrival of FX maestro Marcus Koch. Mel House had flown him down to Florida to prep his next movie, so we really lucked out - and put him to great use!

SCARS: With all the blood that was flowing around the set, do you have any memorable stories?

STACY: We had so much blood splattering every which way, there came a point where I actually noticed all the excess goop had been flowing to one end of the warehouse set, and apparently it had collected into a gutter and was currently flowing across the building, presumably into all the other various warehouses and storefronts along the row of businesses we were situated in. I really wonder what they must have thought when, literally, a river of blood came gushing across the back wall of their stores. The cops never came to question us, so I guess we got away with it.

SCARS: At least for now! ...So, with that in mind, what horror directors have inspired you and your work?

STACY: Carpenter, Carpenter, and Carpenter. I just get him, I like the sort of fantasy stories he likes to tell, I share a lot of the same influences with him, namely 50's sci-fi and westerns, and I really relate to his no nonsense attitude toward filmmaking. "This is my movie. Love it or hate it, it's mine." Plus, he has the balls to smoke in public and on camera, which is a

dangerous thing to do these days, now that people have been made aware that smoke is... well, bad for you.

SCARS: What makes SWEATSHOP different from your first film, DOMAIN OF THE DAMNED?

STACY: Sweatshop is different, in every possible way, from my first film. It's almost the antithesis. Domain was a mass of plot threads running through a gargantuan maze of locations with hundreds of creatures running around wreaking havoc, and it dealt with a huge cast of characters. Sweatshop is a smaller, more claustrophobic experience in the tradition of all the great splatter films I grew up on. If you're a fan of Terror Train, Prom Night, The Burning, Friday the 13th, then the idea is you'll feel like you're hanging out with an old friend from the first frame of Sweatshop. I really kept a tight reign on that concept of the true blue slasher, from the abundance of real latex gore effects, to the Carpenter-esque score; I really wanted the film to feel a part of that classic slasher world and not some sort of overly slick, mean spirited, modern torture flick.

I also wanted the film to really connect with the audience, and to elicit a lot of excitement, laughter, shock, and nail-biting

suspense. That means you have to work a lot harder, you have to do more than just heave buckets of blood at the camera, or show someone screaming and crying for an hour and a half. I hate that feeling that the filmmakers are trying to alienate me as an audience member, or just make me feel disgusted with no real entertainment value to the violence. I think that's a waste of on-film carnage. If I can't evoke an emotional response beyond disgust in you, then you might as well be watching some autopsy show on cable, right? Where's the "fun" factor?

SCARS: Any final thoughts on your SWEATSHOP experience?

STACY: It's really a dream come true for me to make this kind of film. I can only imagine what a bummer it must have been to grow up in the 1950's and dream of making fun, action-packed westerns, and then suddenly find yourself a film student in the gritty era of 1960's Hollywood. That happened to me, I grew up loving splatter films and then by the time I was making movies of my own, old school horror had suddenly gone out of fashion and all anyone wanted to put money into were "thriller" films with toned down violence and gore, nothing too exploitative, and generally really boring like the "I





Know What You Did Last Whatever" films and all the Scream knock-offs with faces lined up on the box.

Luckily for me, while I was making my first film, there was this sudden revolution of digital filmmaking going on out there, and now people are just grabbing a camera and making whatever damn movie they want to make. The cameras and editing equipment are cheap, digital effects are accessible and easy to do in-house, and Texas has become an awesome hub for talented actors, practical effects artists, and other filmmaking professionals because it's a right to work state and we have no unions telling us how many smoke breaks to have between noon and one o'clock. This is my kind of atmosphere. I'm like a kid in a candy store now, going "Okay, now I want to make a film like this, and then next time maybe I'll do one with spaceships... or giant ants..."

Stacy begins prepping for another effects shot, but around the corner, we stumble over an assortment of severed raver limbs and find SWEATSHOP's stunning final girl, Ashley Kay, taking a much-needed break with writer/producer Ted Geoghegan.

SCARS: Ashley, Stacy just told us that you were cast in SWEATSHOP because you did such an amazing job as a number of extras in DOMAIN OF THE DAMNED.

ASHLEY KAY: Aww, I think he just likes my scream. [laughs]

TED GEOGHEGAN: She does plenty of it, too.

SCARS: Can you tell us how all of this came about?

TED: I wrote Sweatshop a few months after Barricade's DVD release, and the company that was supposed to pick up the script decided to pass on it for various financial reasons. I was left with a screenplay that I loved, but unfortunately nowhere to take it. Then, a few months later, Stacy and I started talking, he fell in love with it, and we decided to fast-track it.

ASHLEY: And I was originally brought on set of Domain to be a zombie extra for one day, but wound up learning special effects makeup and playing several other bit parts. It was my first real film experience, and I just wanted to take part in any aspect

of it that I could. I'd go up there any time for whatever reason. I didn't care. I just wanted to be involved. I loved working in front of and behind the camera and I was very pleasantly surprised, actually, when Stacy offered me the role of Charlie in Sweatshop.

SCARS: And how were your experiences working on SWEATSHOP?

ASHLEY: I don't really have a comparable experience, since I went from being silent extras to playing a central role. Everyone was so great - and I've never had so much fun at work. Like a lot of other kids, I'd always dreamed of being in a horror movie since I was very young. Now, years later, I got my first chance to shine and it definitely lived up to be what I'd imagined.

TED: I really can't express how happy I am with it. It's the kind of film I grew up watching, and will undoubtedly watch for my own pleasure for many years to come. The cast was amazing, from our final girl to our piles victims to our amazing killer... and the crew was always top-notch. Everyone really gave 110 percent.

SCARS: We heard that Charlie does a fair

amount of ass kicking in SWEATSHOP. Did you end up with any battle scars, Ashley?

ASHLEY: If you only knew! [laughs] Actually, on the night we filmed the very last shot of the movie, on the very last take, I wound up tripping on the sidewalk outside the club and face-planted right into the cement... My knees and elbows were so bloody and bruised! It was horrible. And of course, I'd never wear knee pads or anything under my costume - like an idiot.

SCARS: And how does this film differ from your previous projects, Ted?

TED: Well, it's not torture porn like *Barri-
cade*, and it's certainly more character
driven than a lot of the other movies I've
made. It's got the prerequisite Marcus
Koch gore seen in *100 Tears* and *Nikos*,
but I think his collaboration with Kristi
and Mike really took it to the next level.
Basically, it's everything I loved about my
earlier films - with more sexy raver girls.

SCARS: Now that you're in *SCARS* what
could possibly be left? What are your
plans for the future?

ASHLEY: Well, I'm only a few months
away from finishing school and I'm actu-
ally relocating to Los Angeles early this
summer to try to pursue a career there.
We'll see what happens... I just really want
to work with a lot of different people and
explore different arts.

TED: And I'm staying in NYC and seeing
what comes my way. I've got a few things
lined up, but right now, it's all about get-
ting *Sweatshop* to the masses. After that, I
guess we'll see!

The duo is called back to the set and, a
topless raver is literally torn limb-from-
limb, everyone goes wild once more. The
day is almost at an end and when the
cheers die down, everyone looks ready for
a long-awaited meal and a few hours of
sleep before starting it all up again tomor-
row. It might not be Hollywood, but with
micro-budget indies like this appearing on
the scene, it's quite obvious that the care-
free spirit of classic slashers is still alive
and kicking... er, smashing.



SPLINTER

An interview with Toby Wilkins

by Scott Essman



In the story, a young couple retreats to the wilderness for a romantic camping weekend, but their idyll is shattered when they are car-jacked by an escaped convict and his girlfriend on the run from the police. As the foursome travel the back roads together, each plotting their next move, they

SPLINTER is the feature film debut from award-winning British horror director Toby Wilkins, and concerns an exhilarating ride of jolts and laughs, and a throw back to the classic creature features of the early 70s and 80s. **Splinter** opens on Halloween and is on video-on-demand right now.

find themselves in deeper trouble than any of them could have imagined -- a blood-crazed, parasitic creature that absorbs the corpses of its victims has laid claim to the woods, and the two couples are now in its sights. Finding shelter at an abandoned gas station, they must use their wits and every weapon at their disposal to stave off the onslaught, not only from the insatiable creature, but also each other.

Born and raised in London, England — the youngest son of playwright and novelist Christopher Wilkins — Toby Wilkins' relocated to Los Angeles to pursue a career in the film industry, working primarily in visual effects and title sequence design for feature films until turning to di-

recting. His short thriller *Staring at the Sun* world premiered at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival and played at dozens of festivals around the world. The film received several awards including Best Horror Short at Stan Winston's ScreamFest LA. The ScreamFest award brought Wilkins' work to the attention of director Sam Raimi (*Evil Dead*, *Spider Man*) and his horror production company Ghost House Pictures.

Ghost House commissioned Toby to write, produce and direct a number of short horror films starting with *Mousetrap*, a shocking cautionary tale about sticking your nose where it doesn't belong.



Raimi then chose Wilkins to direct and produce *Tales from the Grudge*, a series of short horror films to promote the film *The Grudge II*. The shorts premiered on movies.yahoo.com and were featured on more than a dozen other movie related web sites including doyouhaveagrudge.com.

In addition to directing, Wilkins has served as producer, cinematographer, post-production supervisor, editor and visual effects artist on film projects with directors ranging from indie first-timers to luminaries including Brett Ratner, and James Cameron. Wilkins directed (with John Chuldenko) the 2004 Sundance Film Festival trailers featuring puppet filmmakers experiencing the festival for the first time in a series of seven 35mm short film

TW: The idea from the creature that I brought to the script came from conversations that I had with George Haywood. It was a parasite that takes over your body from the inside. It manipulates your skeleton — whether you are alive or dead — into a new creature. In my mind, the creature exists in two states: a dormant state reminiscent of a sea urchin with spines that burrow into your skin which are hard to get out. It is waiting for some unsuspecting being to come along and stick with a splinter, embed in their flesh, and take over the entire entity, whether something from the woods or a human being. Once it's got enough nutrients to build a muscle structure inside your body, it can break the surface of your skin and create more splinters and infect the next victim on contact. It's a mindless creature

the movie in a remote area of Oklahoma? Oklahoma is a great area to set the movie in because there are some very old undisturbed forest areas. It's a well-known part of Oklahoma's history. There's a lot to be explored in the world and we're only scratching the surface. The floor of the ocean and deep underground. It's always fascinating to imagine what might be out there.

SCARS: How did you imagine the creature behaving in the movie?

TW: At its core, it's a very simple entity. From that dormant stage it creates sharp splinters that gets that whole process rolling. It's capable of going person-to-person at the simplest touch. The more splinters that get embedded in you, the



vignettes. His next project is scheduled to be *The Grudge 3*.

SCARS: How did you come to direct *SPLINTER*, which is the next step in the long history of low budget horror films?

Toby Wilkins: There was a script that came to me called *TOOTH AND NAIL* written by Ian Shorr. It was a very strong siege movie with the same characters, location and setting. It was a very classic nature that was reminiscent of all of the movies that I loved growing up: *Dawn of the Dead*, *Alien*, *The Thing*. All of the movies ingrained in our minds when we were kids.

Where did you get the innovative idea for the creature in the film?

with no eyes or ears to track you with. It relies on other environmental means to track its victims. How it tracks them is one of the big story elements.

SCARS: How does the creature move from person to person?

TW: Essentially it's looking for any warm-blooded creature. The creature can inhabit any living entity if it's found at the bottom of the ocean or the forest. It will find anything at its disposal. The muscle memory that's ingrained in its DNA from infecting dozens of different type of creatures gives it its unique type of moment. It's been in undisturbed areas of the planet.

SCARS: Is that why you chose to shoot

faster you are transformed. The scariest part about that is that you are still alive as it's transforming you. The history of parasite transformations is that it happens once you've been killed by the creature very quickly — you are never consciously fighting against the infection. There is that very brief moment when you know you are infected before you turn. When characters get infected and they know before you get transformed, that was one of the most effective scenes.

SCARS: How did you imagine the transformation occurring with your lead characters?

TW: I don't think I've ever seen a prolonged period of transformation where you are literally able to fight against the crea-

ture growing inside of you and experience that metamorphosis from within. Not being killed by a creature that was attacking you from the inside. I am a huge fan of *Alien* – it's my number one horror movie of all time. There are references to my love of that movie. The idea that this creature doesn't care if you are alive or dead. It needs what's inside you and it needs a new skeleton. It needs to propagate and infect a new victim very quickly.

SCARS: Did you choose to use practical puppets, makeup effects, and creature suits so that you could get the creature to act realistically onscreen?

TW: Yes. One, it's really important to me that the audience believes what they are seeing. To make that happen, the charac-

hope to achieve this was to do it practically.

SCARS: How did you develop what makeup effects and practical effects you would see in the film?

TW: Quantum created all of the practical creature and makeup effects in the movie. I did a lot of previz in Photoshop and CG work on my own to figure out how specifically the human figure could be distorted and broken and how it would move under the control of this creature. I did some CG sketches of various stages of transformation which I then took to Quantum. They figured out how then to make what was in my head a reality on set. They did a great job creating the biggest piece of the creature which we see – a suit that was worn

ratio. Technically, you can have puppeteers right below the frame or above the frame and cut them out. It's just more cinematic. It gives everything much more scope. I had a 135mm lens shooting extreme closeups the whole time. We developed this rapport where we capture great closeups while we capture the master.

SCARS: How did you enact the makeup-creature effects on a practical location?

TW: The gas station was built into an actual antique gas station – [art directors] Jennifer and Thom Spence ripped the front off the building to put in huge glass windows to be in this overlit fish bowl in a cage – being on display and looking out into the dark was integral to what was scary about the movie. The DP Nelson



ters need to believe what they are seeing. One of the major reasons to do 99% of the shots practically was to give the actors something to work with. It's very unrewarding for actors to perform against green screen or against a tennis ball on a stick. It's very difficult for actors and a director to work in that environment. The results don't give the audiences the emotion needed. Another big reason was literally budget.

You see hundred million dollar movies that do CG creatures, blood, and transformations and they fail with that money. Like every horror fan, I get taken out of the movie by something that doesn't sell itself as being real on the screen. I don't believe what I'm seeing or identify the characters. The only way I could every

by our performers. I knew that we weren't going to be able to shoot it particularly wide. In a lot of ways, that dictated the style of photography and editing. I am a huge fan of the Bourne movies for their photography and editing. To harness that kind of intensity and just be able to show glimpses of the creature combined with special effects photographed quickly was the only way that we could do this on our budget.

SCARS: One of the great things about the movie is the aspect ratio of 2.35:1. What informed the decision to shoot it that way?

TW: 2:35-1 was a bit of a fight. There is a big requirement to deliver a 4:3 version of the movie. But I made a big list of great horror movies filmed in that aspect

Cragg created a lighting scenario in the gas station so that we could shoot almost 360. Then, everything was brought in. There were a lot of donations from local companies. The entire shoot was four weeks and we were inside the gas station with three of those.

SCARS: What were the challenges of shooting a creature movie on location?

TW: In the middle of summer in Oklahoma, we had torrential rainstorms and hurricanes. It was challenging – about 105 degrees. For half of our shoot day, we were shooting with the building tented for night. It was an oven in there. Maintaining the consistency of sweat wasn't difficult. There were challenges of having a limited amount of space. It was very im-



portant to achieve a shallow depth of field in a small space to make it look cinematic. We shot with the Arri D-20 digital cameras to digital tape – HD Cam. It's a film camera with a digital back end. It's closer to 35mm than it is to digital. Combining all of those elements was certainly a lot of fun. For the action sequences, the reset time would have been crippling, so we shot entire action sequences in one take at the climax of the film. We shot between five and eight pages a day – like TV pace. One of the great things about shooting digitally is that we would do long takes without stopping and let the actors play with different things.

SCARS: What are the drawbacks of shooting so much material with practical effects in a short schedule?

TW: A lot more is achieved practically than people think in movies. When the state trooper gets ripped in half was quite a mess. The finger tripod – to have them deliver a severed hand that we could shoot

in closeup that would look like real fingers from any angle was a real treat. We did not have the opportunity to shoot many takes – there wasn't enough time. In today's low budget filmmaking world, there isn't the opportunity to be that self-indulgent. I tend to focus more on performance, dialogue and emotional storytelling, not in the creature scenes per se. I had a second unit to shoot the severed finger sequence. That was the only time we broke off a camera to shoot anything specific. Others were one or two takes. I shot the whole film with two cameras. That is the only way to get enough footage in the can.

SCARS: What is key to this type of film where you are in one setting with a small group of characters?

TW: Having the audience identify with the characters is key. I hope that they appreciate the complexity and flaws of the characters and identify with them. With the

performances that these actors gave that they feel for them more and experience the character's journey's in a way that raises the level of the film. If you break down and analyze each of the three characters, they each bring their own personal flaws and overcome them. To take the antihero bad guy, Dennis, and transform him into someone that the people will love by the end of the movie. Seth steps up to what he perceives are his girlfriend's desire in a mate. What she sees in him and loves in him are his own innate positive qualities.

SCARS: Will you direct more horror movies after *The Grudge III*?

TW: I just love making movies, but horror is a lot of fun to direct and there's many things that are cool about doing horror. I've dabbled in a lot of different areas. My ultimate goal is movies that are as entertaining and fun to watch without particularly focusing on any one genre.



SPLINTER

An Interview with OZZY ALVAREZ (Quantum Creations FX, Creature Design)

by Scott Essman

One of Hollywood's most respected and in demand 'creature and make-up effect' houses, the team at Quantum Creations FX has been responsible for some of the scariest creatures in movie history, including: I Am Legend, X-Men III, Superman II, War of the Worlds, Fantastic Four II, Cabin Fever II, and Bogeyman II among many, many others. Ozzy Alvarez was the creature designer on SPLINTER.

This film featured only six actors and all worked to some degree with the makeup effects: Blake (played by CHARLES BAKER) is the gas station attendant who first sees the creature and is infected by it. Polly (JILL WAGNER) escapes the creature with her boyfriend Seth (PAULO COSTANZO). Dennis (SHEA WHIGHAM) is a psychopath who loses his entire arm in the process in one of the film's most startling effects – an actual amputation on screen. His girlfriend Lacey (RACHEL KERBS) gets badly infected by the creature and Sheriff Terri (LAUREL WHITSETT) is ripped in half by the creature. In this exclusive interview, Alvarez discusses doing all of his work practically like the old masters including Dick Smith, Rick Baker, and Rob Bottin.



SCARS: How did your work on the start of this creature feature begin?

OZZY ALVAREZ: Toby came to us with initial designs which was challenging. Building a creature suit without an actor is challenging. His idea was for multiple appendages: puppeteered arms with an actor in a suit. It took an actor and three pup-

peteers to make it. Each person that the creature kills is morphing body parts into it. We had to maneuver the arms separately within the actor's arms. I did a three-hour makeup on an actor. Then was in the suit a half-hour and started throwing up. The Lacey creature had multiple appendages.

SCARS: One of your best effects in when

Sheriff Terri is torn in half by the creature. **OA:** When the cop got ripped in half, we had everything set up and literally ran out of time. I told Toby that he wasn't going to get a bunch of takes. The final call was to move it to a later date. We ended up shooting it in LA as an insert shot when the skin rips and the blood comes out.

SCARS: Did you use any special materials for the different effects in the film?

OA: All of the creature work was traditional style foam latex. We had silicon rod-puppeteered arms with cable-controlled fingers bending back. For the amputation of Dennis' arm, his real arm was back with a shoulder harness. There was a hollow gap with blood tubing. Seth used a real box cutter and cut through the silicon arm that was attached to Dennis.

SCARS: How difficult was your schedule on the film?

OA: Shooting these types of movies 16 hours a day on location is really hard. Sometimes you look at the footage and it looks like shit. It's always hard to tell, but with Toby directing and coming from a visual effects background made it easier for



us. I was there five weeks – four weeks shooting all nights in the middle of Oklahoma – hot as hell and cold at night. We would wrap at 7AM. Set call was 5PM.

SCARS: Did you perform in any of the creature suits or props?

OA: We made a Lacey puppet, part of the suit, and that's me outside the window smashing against the glass as hard as I can, covered in blood. The Dennis hand is my hand tied with monofilament pulling back. When the arm is reaching through the night deposit box, it is makeup artist Danielle Noe's arm that I painted to look like the creature! We went back to old school Tom Savini-type ways to make the practical effects look good.

SCARS: Yes, it seems like you referenced classic late-1970s and early 1980s film with your designs.

OA: 100% for sure, this was straight out of *The Thing*, *The Howling*, *American Werewolf*, and *Alien*. We tried to make everything practical. Nowadays, people choose effects to be digital. Then, we tried to mix it up with some new techniques. We tried to innovate what little we could with the time we had. I think we accomplished everything that Toby wanted.

SCARS: I was reminded of Rob Bottin's effects in *The Thing* with this movie!

OA: Bottin is like the best makeup artist ever to do the effects that he did in *The Thing*. You can't do them better digitally. When the Norris head has the spider legs coming out!!!

SCARS: Lacey's hand was one of the best effects in the film... it moved around like a real hand but with jerky movements like a foreign creature would use to make a human hand move!!!

OA: There was two version of the Lacey hand. That hand was puppeteered from below with magnets. We went though a fake floor so it doesn't look like monofilament. It's two magnets tracking each other. That dark black blood reacts to the magnet also. There are tiny bits of metal in the liquid to make a spiky pattern. It's called Ferol fluid. We did research on it and found it. It was \$100 for six ounces. That's how we got the blood to react that way. We could take that fluid on a magnetized board and make spikes come up. There is some cool potential with that.

SCARS: Was there any digital work done to enhance your practical effects?

OA: Some of the spikes are digital. We made tiny steel rods so they could look like needles. Some of that was pushed through fake pieces of skin and fake arms so that we could maneuver the spikes towards the people. They walk close to the body and the spikes lean towards them.

SCARS: Describe your relationship with Quantum?

OA: Quantum made everything for *Splinter*. Christian Beckman was Steve Johnson's coordinator at EdgeFX. After Steve went out of business, Christian opened up Quantum with Jeff Rawley. I came in and supervised everything and took it all to set.

SCARS: What is your future in special makeup effects?

OA: I would love to do more films in the horror genre and try to keep it as practical as possible. With the bigger budget stuff, doing digital effects, you forget how to do it with makeup. For me, I want to keep challenging myself and hopefully I could do a lot more horror films.





the business of HORROR

an interview with christopher p garetano

By Will Sanders

Nowadays, mega multiplex theaters have brought about the death of the drive-ins, grindhouses and cinema palaces we grew up with. The theaters themselves quit having that community cinema feel, replaced instead with corporations intent on merchandising, and the almighty dollar as determined through their target-audience. Unfortunately, while we've lost the theaters of yesteryear, we're stuck with the age-old problem of studio control, a dilemma indie filmmakers have faced for years as they battle to have their films screened and distributed.

Remembering the struggle of indie filmmakers and the films and cinemas of the past is director Christopher P. Garetano, in his documentary, *Horror Business*. In a refreshing turn, the Biz is no melodramatic, nostalgic trip down memory lane either, as Garetano forces us to answer the question: Is making movies *really* a way to spend a life?

SCARS: When did your love for horror first start?

GARETANO: Halloween (the holiday) was a strong influence on me. I think the atmosphere of Halloween for a kid is inherently magical. My father had one of those gelatin (Dick Smith) monster make-up kits, a Frankenstein variation. I think I was five, and he was applying it in the bathroom mirror. I was blown away with his transformation. Also around the same time, *Creature from the Black Lagoon* was on TV in 3D. So those Universal Monsters were first.

My folks also owned a video store in the early eighties so I grew up on a constant diet of movies. It was really when I discovered a documentary (*Scream Greats Volume 1*) that I was blown away by the process of horror films. The doc was about Tom Savini, and watching him and George Romero make movies made me truly appreciate horror films. The atmosphere on their sets was very alluring, too. There was no pretension or stuffiness. It was a bunch of friends having a great time. People need to remember that when they make their films. I think that camaraderie and genuine artistry is missing from many sets.

Romero actually invited me to the set of *Diary Of The Dead* and I feel like it was a nice full circle milestone in my life.

SCARS: Tell us about your documentary, *Horror Business*.

GARETANO: It's an essay about the inspired generation of horror moviemakers. It's about all those little boys that grew up on and loved horror films. It's about those people that want so badly to make movies for a living. Those people who have no connections and no funding but they go for it anyway. Unfortunately, there are many harsh realities that come with that dream and *Horror Business* is a study on that reality. It's a collage of thoughts and images that are the everyday norm for the inspired generation.

SCARS: What inspired you to make a documentary on amateur filmmakers?

GARETANO: My own experiences. After I graduated from film school, I was hit with this realization that it was going to be nearly impossible to get a professional film career going. I had no money and no connections. I was working as a PA on a few movies and as a camera prep tech for Panavision in NY. Along the way I met so many bitter ex-wannabe moviemakers, and it turned me off from any industry job. I worked as a home alarm installer and I saved up the money to make a movie that was about what I was going through.

SCARS: A lot of people say there's no originality in mainstream horror. What's your opinion?

GARETANO: I think the independent film world is going through a major evolution, as is the mainstream world. The indie horror world has been very guilty over the past few years of shamelessly making recycled versions of what the mainstream outfits have been making. This is sad because the independents don't have to, and shouldn't, do this. In the past, the only way to survive (as an independent artist) was to go against the grain.

A problem that feeds this is the negative influence--or attention--given by fan websites and mindless forums. The indie filmmakers seem to fear the cynical and harsh attacks that come from these sites so they seem to cater to what they think is right. For the most part I got a good response from my first film (*Horror Business*) however I see many artists getting undeserved flack for some really good work. Internet opinions should not dictate how art is made.

There's a sour and nasty vibe to some movie sites these days. They seem to shun independent artists and vocalize their hatred for just about everything original. The last thing we need is some smug gossip magazine for horror films. Who the hell wants that? It's really bad Karma that will come back to haunt them all. The artists should be the only ones who decide what the art will be. I don't believe in making a democracy out of movie making. If that happens, you can kiss originality goodbye forever. I think it's dying down though. Thank god. There have been some really great films over the past few years. Movies like *No Country For Old Men*, *Bug*, *Zodiac*, *Pan's Labyrinth*, *There Will Be Blood* and *The Signal*, prove good movies have not died. Even the most mainstream film in the world right now (*The Dark Knight*) is not so mainstream. I think it's a very exciting time for movies.

SCARS: In *Horror Business*, there were a few scenes of stores built where drive-ins used to be. You projected films on these buildings, and touched on how drive-ins fueled your love for film. Can you talk a little more about these scenes?

GARETANO: I thought it would be appropriate to have "the ghosts" of our childhood playing on the windows of the structure that currently marks its grave. There's sadness to those scenes with David because those are the scenes I personally relate to most. It's hard to get inside



the head of the independent moviemaker if you're not one. It's not a glamorous life. It's really like a constant gut punch. These guys will work their asses off and it's always that childhood dream that's moving them along. So (not to get too Freudian here) there's an inner child who is extremely sensitive in all of us and that's where it weighs down heavy. It's those old drive-in memories that inspired us in the first place. That's a sentimental time that leaves a sadness in its wake.

SCARS: You are working on a documentary on the filming of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* called *South Texas Blues*. Can you tell us about the project?

GARETANO: *South Texas Blues* is a project that's been evolving for over ten years. It began as a partial documentary/drama about the making of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Over the past two years of working on the screenplay, it evolved into a fantasy/horror/drama about a filmmaker (TOBE) obsessed with making his macabre movie. It's based on tons of deep research but it has a unique story of its own. Mostly it's through the imagination and hallucinations of TOBE.

It's an odyssey of a man trying to complete a film titled *Saturn In Retrograde* AKA *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. I've been working on the graphic novel adaptation of my script with artist Trevor Cook.

Steve Bissette (*Swamp Thing*, *Taboo*) liked the idea so much and offered to draw the cover. We should have the prototype done by early 2009 and have it published by that following spring. I'm very excited for the book and I know that it's going to help inspire a better situation to ultimately get the vision on the screen. Trevor and I were looking at classic books like Frank Miller's *Hard Boiled* and Dave McKean/Grant Morison's *Arkham Asylum* for illustrative inspiration. Mainly this book and the movie will have an originality of its own.

SCARS: What other projects are you currently working on?

GARETANO: I've been shooting three feature documentaries over the past three years. They range from a sequel to *Horror Business* (*Son Of Horror Business*) to a documentary (*Montauk Unveiled*) about alleged alien conspiracy at Camp Hero air force base in Montauk, NY.

One project that I'm very excited for is *Cottonmouth*. It's a macabre story of four angry ladies who rise from the grave to take their revenge on a tampon company man. It regards the many women who died of toxic shock syndrome in the 80's. It's a short horror film adaptation of Steve Bissette's anthology comic. It appeared in a book titled *Gore Shriek* and was a favorite comic of my childhood. It's going to play

exclusively on the Internet on Halloween. And beginning in late September, we're going to have some great content on the site (COTTONMOUTH.TV) as well. Everything from (how to) monster make-ups to true ghost stories. It's all going to be one big celebration of horror, independent movie making, comic books, and Halloween. Everything on the site is free and you can optionally donate to several worthy charities.

SCARS: With all you've been through, what's your advice for someone who wants to break into the business?

GARETANO: Make sure this is what you really want to do and go for it. Don't believe that your work needs to be made by a certain standard. Avoid how anyone else makes their films and find your own voice. Be fearless with your work and don't fear those fleeting internet voices who attack all things original. Don't listen to anyone that tells you "You can't do this." And last but not least MAKE MOVIES... It's the only way. Who cares if you have five dollars to your name? Work three jobs, borrow, or find a way. Tell your stories. Live your life. You can't tell good stories if you have no life experience to fuel your imagination.

Just good luck to everyone out there that's making movies with their hearts and souls. I know it's rough and you're certainly not alone.



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